

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: ECON, ECEM, UR
SUBJECT: MINERAL FERTILIZER PRODUCTION CONTINUES TO LG

REF: (A) MOSCOW 11940, (B) MOSCOW 10522

1. DECEMBER 21, "ECONOMIC COMMENTARY" IN SOTSIALISTICHESKAYA INDUS-
TRIYA PUTS CHEMICAL INDUSTRY 1.8 MILLION TONS SHORT SO FAR OF 1976
TARGET OF 94.5 MILLION TONS IN PRODUCTION OF MINERAL FERTILIZER.
IT STATES ARREARS THIS YEAR HAVE GROWN LIKE A "SNOWBALL."
ENTERPRISE OFFICIALS CITE THE EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS LAST
WINTER AND RESULTING GAS SHORTAGE, POOR QUALITY OF SUPPLIES AND
LACK OF SPARE PARTS AS REASONS FOR THE SHORTFALL. IN ADDITION,
THE COMMENTARY NOTES THAT IN THE FIRST 11 MONTHS OF 1976 ONLY
ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF THE PLANNED SIX MILLION TONS OF NEW PRODUCTION
CAPACITY WAS BROUGHT ON STREAM.

2. ALL THESE FACTORS, ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, DO NOT EXCUSE
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THE DIRECTORS OF THE ASSOCIATIONS AND PLANTS OF RESPONSIBILITY
FOR POOR PRODUCTION AND TECHNICAL "DISCIPLINE", HIGH
EQUIPMENT ACCIDENT RATES, AND SLOW MASTERING OF NEW EQUIPMENT.
ALSO, SOME PLANTS HAVE INTRODUCED NEW EQUIPMENT INTO USE
WITHOUT PROPER TESTING.

3. REMEDIAL MEASURES REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN "INEFFECTIVE" WITH NO "TURNING POINT" REACHED IN THE WORK OF THE LAGGING ENTERPRISES. ALTHOUGH IT IS TOO LATE TO ALTER THE SITUATION THIS YEAR, THE "STABLE WORK" OF THE MINERAL FERTILIZER INDUSTRY MUST BE A MAJOR CONCERN NEXT YEAR.

4. COMMENT: LAGGING PRODUCTION OF MINERAL FERTILIZER HAS BEEN A CONSTANT PROBLEM IN 1976, REFTELS. THE REASONS FOR THE SHORTFALL APPEAR COMPLEX AND NOT EASILY SOLVABLE. SHORT-AGES OF SULFURIC ACID, WHICH EARLIER HAD RECEIVED A GREAT DEAL OF THE BLAME, REFTEL A, ARE NOT MENTIONED IN THE LATEST ANALYSIS.

5. ARTICLE LISTS 11-MONTH RESULTS FOR MAJOR PLANTS AND PRODUCTION ASSOCIATIONS WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST TO WASHINGTON AGENCIES. MATLOCK

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